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SUBJECT: BASRAH GOVERNOR SIDELINES IRAQI ARMY ROLE IN BASRAH  
SECURITY

REF: A) BASRAH 93, B) BAGHDAD 1869

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BASRAH, DEPARTMENT OF STATE.  
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a June 5 meeting, Basrah Governor Mohammed Wa'hili told the Deputy Regional Coordinator that the Iraqi Army would have a small role in the recently-enacted emergency security plan for Basrah, and the Iraqi police would carry out most of the plan. The 5-person delegation left Basrah today to return to Baghdad. The governor said he is trying to coordinate the security committee with the police and security forces. He identified employment and basic services, along with financing from the central government, as crucial issues to be resolved. End Summary.

¶2. (C) In a June 5 meeting, Governor Wa'hili told the DRC that the Iraqi Army would have only a small role in the recently-enacted emergency security plan for Basrah because "there were not that many of them." The role of the Iraqi Army would be limited to manning vehicle checkpoints on major roads. The Iraqi Police, he said, would have the biggest role to play in carrying out the emergency plan. This plan had been approved by Minister of Provincial Affairs, Dr. Safa al-Saafi.

¶3. (C) The 5-person delegation sent to Basrah by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki all returned to Baghdad earlier on June 5, the governor said. When pressed for information about the delegation, the governor avoided naming the members. The governor said he had spent the day meeting with the Chief of Police and other security forces in Basrah, and described these individuals and organizations as part of an "investigation committee" that would work cooperatively, but separately, from the security committee. (Comment: Chief of Police Hassan Sewadi was present in the Governor's office as the REO delegation arrived. End comment.)

¶4. (C) He said that everyone involved in security and investigations had agreed to try to implement the emergency plan, but he admitted that there were still issues that needed to be resolved, such as the exact roles of the Iraqi police and Iraqi army in carrying out the plan. He said that he believed the June 3 marketplace bombing in Basrah had been carried out by Sunnis who were seeking revenge for recent assassinations. He alluded to outside forces trying to destabilize Basrah in order to protect their own interests.

¶5. (C) When asked what he thought of the PM's visit to Basrah on May 31, the governor diplomatically responded that the visit certainly made everyone in Basrah, especially the Basrah Provincial Council (BPC), focus on security. The worldwide attention on Basrah, he said, was not a bad thing either. He

expressed guarded pessimism that the 30-day state of emergency would resolve all of Basrah's security issues because "the enemy is always changing its strategy." He said that the real problems in Basrah were the lack of employment opportunities and basic services such as electricity and running water, and that he could not address these problems because he had received no budget from the central government.

¶6. (C) Comment: A political survivor and smooth-talker, Governor Wa'hili has successfully used the PM's visit to Basrah and his declaration of a state of emergency to maneuver himself into a position of even greater power as head of the emergency security committee. Now that he has acquired even more authority over security matters, the governor had no qualms about admitting to us that he did not foresee a major role for the Iraqi Army in securing Basrah, and planned to have the Iraqi Police in charge of implementing the emergency security plan. On the contrary, we believe that the Iraqi Police are too compromised by militia-infiltration to be trusted with securing Basrah, and that the Iraqi Army must play a significant role in carrying out the PM's state of emergency in Basrah.

¶7. (C) Comment Continued: Wa'hili's view that he is in charge of enforcing the emergency measures will exacerbate his poor relations with the national government. As pointed out by British Ambassador Patey in a recent Ministerial Council for National Security (MCNS) meeting (septel), the Governor has no control over Coalition Forces, the Iraqi Army, or National Police assets. He has no standing to say what role the Iraqi Army will or will not play in enforcing emergency measures declared by the Prime Minister. End comment.

MARRANO